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Design & Cleanup Quarterly Progress Report No. 4
October 1 - December 31, 2002

Highlights

Sediment Sampling Program Completed for the Season
Sediment Processing/Transfer Facility Siting Process Initiated
Performance Standards Development Initiated
Negotiations on Remedial Design Settlement Proceeding
Draft Community Involvement Plan Under Development

Sediment Sampling Program Completed for the Season

Field crews working for the General Electric Company (GE) started the process of collecting approximately 30,000 sediment samples from the Upper Hudson in early October. The two-year sediment sampling program will provide information needed to design the cleanup plan for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site. Data from the sediment sampling program is necessary to determine the precise areas of the Upper Hudson between Fort Edward and the Troy Dam that require dredging.

Between October 3 and November 1, more than 5,500 samples were collected from approximately 1,000 locations. This represents approximately 20% of the total sample locations. Core tubes, as seen in the photo to the left, are used to collect sediment samples. On October 31, core collection was suspended for the season due to safety concerns associated with cold weather conditions. EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and its contractors, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) oversaw the sediment sampling operations.

GE field crews also collected core samples for grain size analysis in River Sections 1 and 3 and initiated geophysical surveys (side scan sonar) on November 1. Survey efforts were completed in River Sections 1 and 3, except for the Lock 6 land cut. All field activities were concluded on November 25, except for some sediment sampling work in the Lock 6 land cut which was performed in December.

GE will begin to collect the remainder of the 30,000 samples in the Spring. The analysis of samples collected during October 2002 is on-going. The results of the 2002 sampling will be available in the Spring.

Boat Trips for Media Conducted during Sediment Sampling: On October 9th EPA conducted a boat tour of the Upper Hudson sediment sampling effort for members of the media. Television stations representing major network affiliates and print reporters attended. The participants were taken to several sediment sampling (coring) locations on the river where coring boats were taking samples from the river bottom. Television cameras and print photographers were able to get closeups of the coring process while EPA, USACE and GE representatives provided a play-by-play description.

Sediment Processing/Transfer Facility Siting Process Initiated

EPA's cleanup plan for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site calls for the dredging and removal of approximately 2.65 million cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediments from the Upper Hudson River. Specialized facilities (sediment processing/transfer facilities) that will be used to dewater, process and transfer the dredged sediments are a crucial part of the cleanup.

Sediment Processing/Transfer Facilities Will Perform Several Major Functions:

- **Transferring sediment from the edge of the river to the processing area;**
- **Sediment processing, including the removal of water (dewatering) and stabilization;**
- **Treating the removed water, and**
- **Transferring stabilized sediment to trains or barges for transport to licensed, off-site disposal facilities or for beneficial use.**

EPA has started a facility siting process to locate one or more suitable locations for the facilities within a study area of ½ mile on each side of the Upper Hudson River, from the Hudson Falls Dam to just downstream of the Port of Albany. This will be a year-long process that will engage the public and provide ample opportunities for public comment. EPA has retained Ecology & Environment, Inc. (E&E), headquartered in New York State, to assist the Agency in identifying potential sites for sediment processing/transfer facilities. As an initial step, E&E prepared the *Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site Facility Siting Concept Document, December 2002*. The Concept Document identifies the criteria and process that will be used in selecting the sediment processing/transfer facility locations.

THE FACILITY SITING PROCESS

- Development of criteria for guiding the facility siting and decision-making process;
- Process established for identifying, screening, recommending, and selecting locations;
- Public input solicited;
- Identification of preliminary candidate sites using engineering criteria;
- List of preliminary candidate sites released to the public for input;
- Identification of final candidate sites by screening and evaluating preliminary sites using engineering criteria and additional environmental and quality of life considerations;
- List of final candidate sites released to the public for input;
- Site-specific field evaluations (*environmental and engineering feasibility investigations*) conducted on each of the final candidate sites;
- Preparation of field investigation reports;
- Announcement of recommended site(s) to the public;
- Public meetings and comment period;
- Final site(s) selected; and
- Report issued documenting the facility siting process, rationale used to screen and evaluate preliminary and final candidate sites, identification of selected site(s), and reasons for the decision.

Field Office Director N.G. Kaul discusses the facility siting process.

On December 4, 2002, EPA released the Concept Document to the public, followed by public availability sessions in Ft. Edward and Albany on December 11 and 12, to provide information, answer questions, and seek public input on the selection process and engineering criteria. Details of the facility siting process and criteria can be found in the Concept Document and in the *Project Update: Facility Siting, December 2002*, both of which are available on-line at www.epa.gov/hudson or by contacting EPA at (518) 747-4389 and requesting a copy.

E&E also is developing a base Geographical Information System (GIS) map of the facility siting study area to be used in the siting process. This map will include information from federal and state databases (e.g., roads, railways, hazardous waste listings, and endangered species listings) and local land use and tax parcel data from the four Upper Hudson counties within the facility siting study area (Washington, Saratoga, Rensselaer, and Albany Counties).

Performance Standards Development Initiated

EPA's cleanup plan calls for the development of engineering and quality of life performance standards. They will be developed by EPA during the project design, with input from the public and in consultation with the state and federal natural resource trustees. The standards will help ensure that the cleanup meets the human health and environmental protection objectives of the Record of Decision (ROD) on the cleanup plan. EPA has retained consultants Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. and TAMS/Earth Tech to assist the Agency in developing engineering performance standards. We have also retained E&E to help us in developing quality of life performance standards.

Engineering Performance Standards

THE ROD CALLS FOR peer review by independent scientists of the dredging resuspension, residuals, and production rate performance standards and the attendant monitoring program, and a second peer review of the report prepared after the end of the first phase of dredging; it will evaluate the dredging with respect to these performance standards. The dredging will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will be the first construction season of dredging. The dredging during that year will be implemented initially at less than full scale operation. It will include a monitoring program of all dredging operations. DURING THE SECOND PHASE OF DREDGING, CONDUCTED AT FULL-SCALE, EPA WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR, EVALUATE PERFORMANCE DATA AND MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS.

Engineering Performance Standards

Resuspension Performance Standard: Intended to guide the monitoring and control of PCB releases during dredging operations.

Residuals Performance Standard: Will provide a basis to assess compliance with the target PCB concentration for the dredged river bottom following completion of dredging.

Productivity Performance Standard: Will propose a reasonable and achievable production rate and/or volume for the dredging of contaminated sediments from the Upper Hudson River.

DEVELOPING ENGINEERING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- o Development of preliminary draft engineering performance standards;
- o Preparation of a document describing each preliminary draft engineering performance standard;
- o Submittal of the preliminary draft engineering performance standards document for public review and comment;
- o Development of revised draft engineering performance standards, taking public input into consideration;
- o Revised draft engineering performance standards submitted to an independent peer review panel;
- o Peer review panel meeting and evaluation of revised draft engineering performance standards;
- o Peer review panel conclusions and recommendations submitted to EPA;
- o Final engineering performance standards developed, taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations of the peer review panel;
- o EPA review and, as necessary, adjustment of the final engineering performance standards prior to commencement of Phase 1 dredging operations;
- o Implementation of Phase 1 dredging operations and attendant monitoring program;
- o At the end of Phase 1 dredging, preparation of a report evaluating the dredging based on the final engineering performance standards;
- o Release of Phase 1 monitoring data and submittal of Phase 1 report to the public and peer review panel;
- o Peer review panel report containing conclusions and recommendations;
- o If necessary, EPA revision of final Phase 1 engineering performance standards; and
- o Final Phase 2 engineering performance standards issued by EPA.

Quality of Life Performance Standards

Quality of life performance standards are intended to help limit the impacts of the dredging, dewatering, and support operations on people, businesses, recreation, livestock, and community activities in the Upper Hudson project area. The cleanup plan includes preliminary performance standards for air and noise, and requires the development of additional quality of life standards that address potential impacts, such as lighting, navigation, and odor. As outlined below, quality of life performance standards will be developed during project design, with input from the public and in consultation with the state and federal natural resource trustees.

DEVELOPING QUALITY OF LIFE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- o Approach for development of quality of life performance standards defined by EPA;
- o Fact sheet on quality of life performance standards submitted to the public for input;
- o Development of draft quality of life performance standards;
- o Public input on draft quality of life performance standards;
- o Final quality of life performance standards for Phase 1 dredging operations developed, taking into consideration public input on the draft standards;
- o Implementation of Phase 1 dredging operations and attendant monitoring program;
- o Public input on Phase 1 dredging operations and monitoring data;
- o If necessary, EPA revision of final Phase 1 quality of life performance standards; and
- o Final Phase 2 quality of life performance standards issued.

Negotiations on Remedial Design Settlement Proceeding

EPA is continuing negotiations with GE on a settlement related to performance of the remainder of the project design work (except for those tasks that EPA will perform itself, i.e., development of performance standards, siting of sediment processing/transfer facilities, and the community involvement program). The settlement currently being negotiated is referred to as the design Administrative Order on Consent (design AOC). If settlement is achieved, the design AOC would be the second AOC since the selection of the remedy for the site. The first AOC, which covered the sediment sampling portion of the project design, was signed by EPA on July 23, 2002. Our goal is to complete the negotiations on the design AOC as quickly as possible and then promptly begin negotiating a third settlement agreement (Consent Decree) with GE for performance of the dredging.

Draft Community Involvement Plan Under Development

EPA is being assisted in developing a new community involvement plan for the Hudson River PCBs site by Marasco Newton Group, Ltd. (MNG), an independent firm hired by EPA. Input from community interviews and community workshops conducted by MNG was used in its development of recommendations for the new community involvement plan. These recommendations are presented in the *Stage 2 Report and Recommendations, December 2002*, which was issued by MNG on December 16, 2002 and is available by contacting EPA at (518) 747-4389 and requesting a copy.

Marasco Newton's *Stage 2 Report and Recommendations* presents three types of recommendations on community involvement:

- – ***Principles of rigorous and meaningful public participation for guiding community involvement activities;***
- – ***Key Elements for a community involvement program that define the important activities to be implemented through EPA's Community Involvement Plan; and***
- – ***Recommended Approaches to implement the key elements of community involvement.***

A draft Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is in the final stage of development. The CIP will serve as the blueprint for public participation throughout design and dredging operations and will be released by EPA for public review and comment quite soon. A 30-day comment period on the draft CIP will be held, during which we will hold public meetings and availability sessions to discuss the draft CIP, answer questions and listen to the community's comments.

Contacts & Feedback:

If you have comments on this progress report, or have suggestions for future progress reports, please contact **David Kluesner, Community Involvement Coordinator, U.S. EPA, Region 2, at (212) 637-3653 or e-mail at kluesner.dave@epa.gov**.

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